



“It is always my pleasure to thank all of the many volunteers and members of the Friends groups who donate so much of your time, talents and other resources to support our libraries. Thanks to all of you! Some of you have been with us through everything; and for numerous years. Others of you may have recently come onboard, and we are glad to have everyone! All of you are extraordinary people and we treasure your uniqueness and dedication to the FCLS. You play a vital role in helping our library staff meet patrons’ needs. I wish all of you the best of everything.”

Gayle Hunter Holloman
Executive Director

Fulton County Library System
Volunteer Handbook 2024

LIBRARY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Congratulations! You have joined the ranks of over 1,600 wonderful people who volunteer for the library annually. This handbook will introduce you to the volunteer program’s guidelines, expectations and benefits as part of your inclusion on the library team. The Fulton County Library System serves as a cultural and intellectual center that enriches the community and empowers all residents with essential tools for lifelong learning.

The library volunteer program provides a vehicle for community members to channel their enthusiasm for the library. Volunteer opportunities offer patrons a way to contribute to the community, fulfill personal goals, achieve a sense of satisfaction and learn more about their library. Volunteer involvement helps the library expand and enrich our services.

The Volunteer Services Office is the coordinating point for managing and developing the library volunteer program. It is responsible for planning volunteer opportunities, recruiting volunteers and tracking the contributions of volunteers. The Volunteer Services Office is also responsible for organizing formal recognition of volunteers, including an annual volunteer appreciation event. It is also a contact point for community groups who wish to become involved with the library. The Volunteer Services Office is located in the Central Library, in downtown Atlanta, and serves the entire system. For more information about the vast array of library services and the history of the library go to www.fulcolibrary.org.

Contact information:

www.fulcolibrary.org, Click “About Us, Volunteer Services”

Email: vol.services@fultoncountyga.gov

eFax: 404.612.0534

Staff: Heather Staniszewski, Volunteer Services Manager, 404.613.0124; heather.staniszewski@fultoncountyga.gov

Marcy Meyers, Volunteer Coordinator, 404.613.0125; marcy.meyers@fultoncountyga.gov

BENEFITS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Satisfaction

The greatest reward volunteers can receive is the satisfaction of doing the work itself, meeting new people, becoming part of a team and knowing they have contributed to an important cause.

Knowledge

Volunteers will gain a broader knowledge of library services, how the library works and how it benefits the community.

Experience

Volunteer service will help you gain valuable work experience that can benefit you in a search for employment, for scholarships or for college admission.

Verification of Volunteer Hours

Volunteers needing a confirmation of service letter should contact the Volunteer Services Office. The letter, including hours volunteered and dates of service, will be sent up to five business days after receipt of the letter request form.

Volunteer Recognition

An annual Volunteer Recognition Program is held in the spring, usually during National Volunteer Week. Volunteers attending are eligible for prize drawings, have an opportunity to meet other library volunteers and learn about the accomplishments volunteers make to the Library System.

Volunteer Service Award

Students and young adults who volunteer 50-100 or more hours, in one calendar year, with the Library System may be eligible for a certificate of appreciation from the President of the United States. All hours must be completed only with the library.

Tax Deductions

Volunteers may be able to deduct non-reimbursed expenditures incurred while serving in the library. Automobile mileage, MARTA fees and parking fees are examples of potential deductible items. Volunteers may not deduct the value of their services. Consult your tax advisor or IRS publication #526, Deductions for Charitable Contributions, for a complete description.

HOLIDAYS

Holidays that occur on a Saturday are observed on the preceding Friday. Holidays that occur on a Sunday are observed on the following Monday.

The Library System is closed on:

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday	3 rd Monday in January
President's Day	3 rd Monday in February
Easter	Sunday in March/April
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Juneteenth Day	June 19
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	1 st Monday in September
Staff Development Day	During September or October
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	Fourth Thursday and Friday in November
Christmas	December 24 and 25
New Year's Eve	December 31

Occasionally the Library System is closed on the Saturday or Sunday preceding or following a holiday. Libraries will also sometimes close due to maintenance issues. Refer to the current library calendar for specific dates or check our website www.fulcolibrary.org and social media outlets.

Volunteer Program Procedures

Supervision of Volunteers

You will be responsible to the manager of the branch or department where you are assigned. In some cases, the manager may delegate the task of coordinating or organizing your volunteer duties to another staff member.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES SAMPLER

Below is a sampling of volunteer opportunities. We strive to match your skills and interests with current Library System needs. Not all opportunities are available at all branches. Feel free to ask about other possible opportunities.

- Auburn Avenue Research Library (Welcome Desk Assistant)
- Clerical Assistant
- Greeter/Special Event Assistant
- Program Instructor (provide expertise in areas such as art, ESL, language, music, pet storytime, taxes, yoga, etc.; certifications may be required)
- Shape-Up-the-Shelves
- Shelving Assistant
- Friends Group (Book sales/stores, events and programs)

Volunteer Name Badges

All volunteers should wear a volunteer name badge while serving. Between shift assignments, badges should be left in the branch or unit in an area designated by the branch or department manager. Wearing your name badge is important for security purposes. Volunteer name badges help patrons distinguish between volunteers and paid staff as well as serve to promote the volunteer program. Volunteers are not to wear name badges from other organizations when on duty at the library, except for cases of projects jointly sponsored by the Library System and another organization.

Volunteer Sign-In Procedures

Volunteers should sign in and out for every shift on the sign-in sheet for volunteers in order to track the hours you have served. Please print your name legibly in ink as it appears on your application. We sometimes have trouble reading cursive writing, nicknames and signatures! Be sure to sign out when taking breaks longer than 10 minutes and to take a lunch break after 4 hours. Only staff should make changes to the sign in sheet.

Information on volunteer hours is used to issue certificates of appreciation and other awards, to invite you to the annual volunteer recognition program, to issue letters confirming volunteer service, to report on volunteer involvement to administration and the Board of Trustees and to make recruitment and training plans. Only hours on the library's sign in sheet will count towards any requirements. Remember, your volunteer service makes your library look good!

Change in Assignment

If you wish to change your assignment, take an additional assignment or change locations, please contact the Volunteer Services Office at 404-613-0125. When possible, we will try to accommodate your request.

Address/Emergency Contact

Please inform the Volunteer Services Office and your supervisor immediately if there are changes to your address, phone number, email address or the emergency contact name and phone number listed on your application.

Group Volunteer Projects

Shape-Up-the-Shelves activities are ideal, one-time service projects for small groups. A volunteer application must be completed and signed by all individuals and a parent or guardian (if applicable), prior to the day helping with group projects. These pre-scheduled activities can be arranged by calling 404-613-0125.

Volunteer Orientation and Training

Volunteers are given a brief tour of the branch or department, shown where to sign-in and out, where relevant information is posted and where to keep name badge and belongings. Most volunteers are then given “on-the-job” training in their assigned branch or department. Some branches have a regularly scheduled volunteer orientation session. In some cases, more specialized training has been developed to assist the volunteer.

Volunteer Schedule and Attendance

The volunteer and supervisor will arrange a mutually convenient volunteer schedule. The staff counts on volunteer attendance once a schedule is established. Please call or email the branch or department as soon as possible if you are unable to fulfill your assignment. If you are unable to volunteer for an extended period of time (vacation, summer), please let the supervisor know as early as possible and contact the Volunteer Services Office at 404-613-0125 or vol.services@fultoncountyga.gov. As always, remember to sign in and out!

Resignation

If you can no longer volunteer, please submit a resignation notice (verbal or written) to your supervisor or to the Volunteer Services Office. You can further assist with our planning by providing more in-depth information regarding your departure from our program. Volunteers must complete a new application if they have not served for 12 or more months.

Confidentiality

Any patron information or other library records volunteers may encounter during the course of volunteer activities must be kept confidential in accordance with state laws covering library records.

Customer Service/Referring Reference Questions

If the volunteer position requires interaction with patrons, please use the service question, “How may I help you?” Always maintain a friendly and professional demeanor. Answer any directional questions, but refer reference questions to library staff. The following is an example of when and how to refer reference questions. You are shelf-reading in the 800 section and a patron asks you about a book or specific topic in that section. You may say to the patron, *“Yes, this is the section and you may browse through this area, but the best way to proceed with your search would be to speak with a librarian. They would be glad to assist you further in your search and have extensive knowledge of resources.”*

Dress Guidelines

Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their assignment. Closed toe shoes are required. Volunteers are expected to be neat and professional. This is particularly important for volunteers interacting with the public and carrying out duties in public areas. If you have any questions, check with your supervisor.

Working with Children

Volunteers who help with children’s services, such as homework help, must have previous experience or certification and work directly with library staff. These rules are designed to protect a vulnerable population and programs are held in an open public space. The rules specifically cover these points: Volunteers are not to indulge any child with gifts of money, food or presents. Donations to a library or the children’s program as a whole are welcome. Volunteers shall not arrange to meet a child outside of the library. Volunteers are not to give a child, or children, a ride, or take a child or children out of the library, unless assisting with an official outing accompanied by staff.

Trainee/Special Programs

The Volunteer Services Office also places individuals who are paid a stipend by another agency, and serve in the library as trainees to gain training and work experience. The AARP’s Seniors in Community Service Employment Program is an example of this type of opportunity. If you are participating in one of these

programs, you should sign in and out on the agency's form. This form should be forwarded to the sponsoring agency. The branch or unit will report volunteer hours to the Volunteer Services Office in certain cases, so that we can track this in-kind service performed for the Library System and recognize your contributions.

Interns

The library may provide unpaid internships for students enrolled in college or other educational programs. Students enrolled in a library degree program who are interested in gaining experience through an internship should contact the Volunteer Services Office. There may be opportunities for students in other types of degree programs also.

Court-Required Volunteer Services

The Library System accepts volunteers completing court required community service on a limited basis when available. The Volunteer Services Office must screen all applicants prior to beginning their hours. If you are completing or anticipating court-required community service, you are expected to follow the same rules as other volunteers, complete your time sheet accurately (in addition to any paperwork the court has given you) and adhere to the schedule once it is set. Court-required service is kept confidential between the supervisor and the Volunteer Services Services. Call 404-613-0125 for more information.

Family Volunteering

Family volunteerism is encouraged. Children younger than 13 years of age may volunteer at some branches to complete school requirements (once approved), or if a parent or guardian enrolls as a volunteer and accompanies their child. These can be limited one-time or ongoing tasks/ projects depending on the assignments available at the library. This is a wonderful opportunity for parents to model volunteering and for youth to give back to their library.

Library Friends Organizations

The Friends of the Library (Friends) organizations are separate, non-profit organizations formed specifically to support and advocate for the library. The Friends are organized by library location. You do not have to be a member of a Friends organization to volunteer at the library, but we encourage you to learn about the Friends and consider joining. Most require a small membership fee. These groups hold events such as author's programs, staff appreciation functions and book sales. They also donate funds to support various programs, purchase materials and fund other needs of their library facility. If your branch does not have a Friends group and you are interested in starting one, contact your Branch Manager or the Volunteer Services Manager at 404-613-0124.

Resolving Problems/Dismissal of Volunteers

Like staff, volunteers must fulfill their duties, are accountable for their work, must follow library rules and exhibit professional behavior at all times. Volunteers are dismissed for failure to perform assigned duties, failure to meet minimum standards of performance or for violations of library rules and procedures. However, staff must always deal fairly with volunteers. If a problem arises relating to your volunteer assignment, talk with your supervisor or the unit manager. Usually a mutually satisfactory solution can be reached. Volunteers can call the Volunteer Services Manager at 404-613-0124 if the branch response is unsatisfactory or questions have not been answered.

Severe Weather and Emergencies

The Fulton County Library System generally does not close due to weather. However, during severe weather, volunteers follow the same guidance given to staff: use your judgment and do not put yourself at risk attempting to attend your volunteer shift. Library closings, if any, will be announced on major radio and TV stations, as well as our website and social media outlets. Please call the branch directly if you are unable to make your scheduled shift. Your supervisor should alert you to any emergency procedures in your unit. Please report any emergency situation, accident or personal injury that occurs while volunteering to the volunteer supervisor immediately.

Standard Rules for Staff and Volunteers

Conversations with patrons, staff members and other volunteers should be carried on in a normal tone and kept within reasonable limits. Personal telephone calls should be short and infrequent. Personal, long-distance calls from the branch phone are not permitted.

The library is a drug and smoke free workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of alcohol or any controlled substance on library premises is prohibited. Violations of this policy will result in the immediate dismissal of a volunteer and may have legal consequences.

Fulton County prohibits discrimination, harassment and retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability and/or sexual orientation. Staff and volunteers must exhibit behavior that is respectful and illustrates equality toward all individuals and should not make comments or engage in behavior that can be construed as reflecting discrimination, bias or sexual harassment.

Internal Customers

Volunteers and staff are also internal customers of each other. The list below indicates the courtesies and responsibilities volunteers and staff should extend to each other to develop successful teamwork:

As a Staff Person, I pledge to:

- Provide adequate information, training and assistance for volunteers to be able to meet the responsibilities of their positions.
- Ensure diligent supervisory aid to volunteers and provide feedback on performance.
- Respect the skills, dignity and individual interests of volunteers and do my best to match these individual skills with the needs of the volunteer assignment.
- Be receptive to any comments from volunteers regarding more efficient ways in which we might mutually accomplish our respective tasks.
- Respond promptly to inquiries or referrals about volunteer service in my unit.
- Treat volunteers as partners with agency staff, jointly responsible for completion of the agency mission.

As a Volunteer, I pledge to:

- Perform my duties to the best of my abilities.
- Accept staff supervision and adhere to agency rules and procedures, including record-keeping and any other specific requirements of the volunteer position.
- Complete required training and be proactive in learning what I need to know in order to perform my duties to the best of my ability.
- Meet time and duty commitments and provide adequate notice so that alternate arrangements can be made.
- Try first to resolve any concerns with my supervisor and/or the unit manager before going to a higher level.
- Support staff as a partner in completing the agency mission and provide feedback on better ways in which we might mutually accomplish our respective tasks.